

CORRESPONDENCE

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

Department Matters, the Speakership, the Tariff, and the President's Message.

Editor of The Progressive Farmer:

Whether due to the personal influence of President Roosevelt, or to the "high-pressure" spirit of the times, there is undeniably an unusual energy exhibited in the executive departments of the government, and as a result a large amount of preliminary work will have been concluded and a number of important matters will be ready for the action of Congress when that body convenes. Secretary Hay has practically completed the treaty with Colombia, paving the way for the Panama Canal, and it will be signed within a week. Its consideration and ratification will be the first business to demand the attention of the Senate. Substantial progress is being made on the reciprocal treaty with Cuba, and an earnest effort will be made to complete it during the remaining fortnight. The Pacific cable, which the Commercial Cable Company is supposed to be laying, is not progressing with the smoothness that was anticipated, and it is regarded as likely that the matter will again come up for Congressional action of some sort.

The Dawes Commission is rapidly completing its allotment of the lands of the Indian Territory, and further Congressional action will be called for by the Secretary of the Interior. Apart from administrative details, the tariff question is bound to cut an important figure during the approaching session, and there are prospects of sharp lines being drawn in the controversy within the Republican Party. It has been given out at the White House, in a semi-official way, without permission to quote, that the President will not urge any immediate revision of the tariff, and many of the Republican Senators and Representatives who have already come to Washington say that there will be none. On the other hand, Secretary Wilson told your correspondent this week that the people of the West were looking to Congress for a diligent inquiry into the existing schedules, that "they do not believe that the tariff schedules are inspired like the Lord's Prayer," that "they are questioning whether the great combinations of capital may not have got beyond control, and whether certain industries longer need the protection of the tariff." Representative Babcock, a prominent candidate for the speakership, and Representative Overstreet, of Indiana, say that the Republican Party pledged itself to "carry tariff revision along Republican lines," that it was that pledge which won the cordial support of the West in the recent elections, and that "the Republicans cannot disregard this pledge."

To some extent the sharp contest for the speakership is the outgrowth of this division of opinion. Representative Dalzell, of Pennsylvania,

who expects to receive the support of all the large manufacturing States of the East, freely says that he asks election on the ground of his high protection views and because he believes that the people desire a speaker who is known to be sound on that question, which, being interpreted, means a speaker who will use his extensive power to prevent any change of the present schedules. Of course Representative Babcock will represent the tariff revision faction, and, to the great surprise of the Eastern politicians, Senator Spooner has declared himself in favor of Mr. Babcock.

The President has practically completed his message and is at present enjoying a brief respite from official duties, preparatory to the exhaustive work which always accompanies a short session of Congress. Of course the message will be kept secret until forwarded to Congress; nevertheless, it is possible to make some intelligent predictions in regard to its purport. The most interesting features will be those clauses which deal with the tariff and the trusts. On both subjects Mr. Roosevelt will express himself conservatively, but he will urge the adoption of a law in accordance with the policy outlined at Pittsburg by the Attorney General, and which it is believed would enable the Department of Justice to institute legal proceedings against any corporation so operated as to restrict trade and destroy competition, regardless of the purpose for which it was incorporated. While recommending the institution of a permanent tariff commission, the President will especially urge that such reduction of the schedules as may seem desirable be accomplished by means of reciprocal treaties with large consumers of American products. A. B. M.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 15, 1902.

"John Mitchell; The Labor Leader and the Man," is the subject of a sketch in the November Review of Reviews, by Frank J. Warne. The president of the United Mine Workers represents the new type of labor leader, as contrasted with the "agitator" of a few years ago. Mr. Mitchell's masterly conduct of the miners' cause has made every one eager to know more about the man and his record than the newspapers have told. This sketch by Mr. Warne well repays a reading.

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